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ABSTRACT

This package was developed through the outreach activities of Project STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools), which developed an early childhood transition model to facilitate the development of state and community-wide systems for transition. The package covers four major component areas of transition: interagency structures and administration, staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation for the next environment. The package contains blank forms, graphic organizers, and other materials for developing and implementing a comprehensive transition plan. It is organized into nine major sections which cover the following issues: determining background considerations; determining participants in transition system design and operation; creating a shared vision; transition system needs assessment; developing an interagency structure; formulating administrative policies and procedures; developing a program for staff involvement; developing a program for family involvement; and developing strategies to prepare the child for the next placement and to prepare the next placement to meet the needs of the child. (PB)

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PROJECT STEPS

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FACILITATION PACKET FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSITION OF YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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EC 300919

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PROJECT STEPS

FACILITATION PACKET

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF

A SYSTEM FOR THE TRANSITION OF

YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

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INTRODUCTION

As state agencies plan and implement services for children with disabilities based on mandates under P.L. 99-457 and P.L. 102-119, transition and interagency collaboration are major components of the service delivery system. In particular, P.L. 102-119 provides requirements that are designed to promote more seamless systems for children birth through five years of age.

Having in place an effective transition practice is not only a matter of legality, but also reality. That is, children and their families move between and within various agency programs. The task for state and local agencies then becomes the development of transition policies and practices that make the process of transition as effective and smooth as possible. In developing transition systems, it is important to assess current practices in transition within the state or community. Once assessed, new policies and procedures can be incorporated into existing systems leading to a system which is more viable.

The following packet was developed as a result of outreach activities of Project STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools). The purpose of Project STEPS has been the development and replication of a model for transition that facilitates the development of state and community wide systems for transition. Through the STEPS model, key issues related to early childhood transition have been identified and recommendations for inclusion into transition practices within the community or state have been delineated. As with the STEPS model, this packet covers four major component areas of transition: administration, staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation for the next environment.

PACKET OVERVIEW

Background

Increasingly, policy makers no longer view individual agencies or programs in isolation but rather from the "big picture" of the overall system of services for children and families. In a nutshell, if the overall "system" is to produce the kinds of outcomes for students that our society wants, then, the various components of the system must work in harmony as children and families move throughout the system, transitioning at various points from one agency or program type to another. This changing perception has resulted in increased emphasis on the need for state and local agencies to have in place effective transition procedures. One such transition is in the early childhood years, ages birth through age 8 years, as children and families transition out of infant and toddler services, into and out of preschool services, and into primary school services.

This emphasis is reinforced by legislation. Federal legislation (PL 99-457 and PL 102-119) requires state and local agencies to have in place policies, procedures, and practices to address the transition of children with disabilities from infant and toddler programs and into preschool programs. Head Start programs are also required to address transition for all of their children (whether or not the children have a disability).

Planning in response to the various issues associated with transition both increases the likelihood of a seamless and successful transition process and helps minimize stress for all concerned. Such planning requires development of effective practices for transition preparation, implementation, and followup for all involved in the process. This includes not only the children and families but also the agencies and staff who serve them.

Purpose of Packet

This packet is designed to assist state and local agencies in planning for transition. In particular, it focuses on the development of a system for the transition of young children with disabilities and their families from one program (sending agency) to another (receiving agency). This system addresses four (4) major issues: interagency structures/administration, staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation for the next environment.

Focusing on a "system" that is responsive to state and local issues is critical. That is, state and local agency staff and families are encouraged to first consider the type of system they want for children and families and the agencies that serve them. Starting with this big picture and then moving to details (e.g. referral forms and timelines, confidentiality issues, etc.) helps to ensure that the various components of the transition system are integrated in a way that is effective and that produces the kind of outcomes we seek. The user is discouraged from using the opposite approach...starting with the detail, e.g. developing a particular procedure for compliance purposes. While legal compliance is very important, it should be seen as only one of several considerations in system development, NOT the driving force behind it. If it is the primary driving force, we are likely to produce a system that complies on paper but which is neither truly responsive to children, families, and

agencies nor, ultimately, in keeping with the spirit of the law.

The packet is not designed to give agencies "the answers". Rather, it is set up in a question and answer workbook-like format to assist agencies in developing transition systems which are responsive to state and local needs. While targeted at children with disabilities, this packet can (and should) be adapted to assist state agencies and local communities in examining the transition of all children, with adaptations as appropriate for children with disabilities and their families.

Recommendations for using this packet include the following.

1. Use of the packet should be overseen by someone knowledgeable in effective models for transition. One such model is Project STEPS (Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools). This packet has been developed to correlate with this model. However, the packet can be used in association with a variety of transition models.

2. It is suggested that this packet is best used over a period of time as the state or local transition system evolves rather than trying to address all areas covered in the packet on one occasion. Moreover, various components of the system will build on each other. For example, the clarification of child preparation issues will prompt the need for staff training and family involvement. Family involvement issues will impact policies and procedures, and so forth.

3. Use of outside facilitation is recommended to assist in addressing some transition issues, particularly those issues on which disagreement among agencies is likely. Once a shared vision for transition and ground level trust are built among participating agencies, other issues can be effectively addressed by an early childhood transition interagency committee over a period of time as an outgrowth of experience with transition in working together as an interagency group.

4. Users are encouraged to examine existing procedures that have been established in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (e.g. referral, evaluation, placement, IFSP/IEP, etc.) as opposed to developing a separate set of procedures for early childhood transition. It is recommended that these "IDEA procedures" be adapted to be appropriate for young children and their families as well as unique early childhood legal requirements under PL 99-457 and PL 102-119. Avoiding "two sets of procedures" will reduce confusion for staff and families, increasing the likelihood that transition procedures are followed appropriately.

5. The user is encouraged to adapt this packet. For example, it can be used as a background and materials resource for an individual facilitator who chooses to adapt all or parts of the packet to assist a state or local group that is developing transition procedures. It can be used as a "cookbook" or guide for use by a total interagency group. The bottom line is to let state or local need drive the approach used.

6. Finally, the user should not let the comprehensiveness of this packet lead to the conclusion that transition is a complicated and overly time consuming process. It is not. Realistically, agencies already have in place some system, formal or not, for the various transition issues (e.g. referral, records transfer, making placement decisions, etc.). The intent of this packet is to help the user make these practices more effective, where such improvements are needed, ultimately making life easier for administrators and direct program staff and programs more responsive to child and family needs. In short, DON'T PANIC. Focus on those issues most pertinent to state and local need and work at a pace appropriate to those circumstances.

Overview of Packet Sections

The packet is divided into nine (9) sections covering the following transition issues.

1. Determining Background Considerations - This section assists the user in laying the groundwork for transition planning. It asks the user to consider:
   a. characteristics of the children and families and the types of transition that will be the focus of the system,
   b. Federal and State legal requirements that will shape transition planning, and
   c. the status of the existing system that will impact what the direction and nature of transition planning are.

2. Determining Participants in Transition System Design and Operation - This section assists the user in identifying key stakeholders in transition. These include agencies with which families are most commonly involved in transition. It also asks the user to consider how families will be involved in transition system design and operation. These determinations will lead to decisions related to the interagency planning and administrative structures (which will likely be refined as planning progresses).

3. Creating a Shared Vision - This section is designed to assist the interagency stakeholder group identified in the previous section in establishing a collective vision shared by the varied participants in the transition system. This includes a process for defining the "big picture" through characteristics of the transition system that "we" want to establish related to the varied audiences the system will serve (i.e. children, families, direct instructional/intervention staff, and administrative staff/entities). Once established, this vision should become the cornerstone for decision making across all aspects of transition.

4. Transition System Needs Assessment - This section provides a tool for determining the state or local level of readiness related to establishing a comprehensive interagency transition system. This is intended to help the user build on existing structures, policies, and procedures rather than replacing them or establishing a "separate" system for transition.

5. Developing an Interagency Structure - This section helps the user define the interagency structure that will be used to plan and oversee transition. The structure should include, in a meaningful way, representation of the key stakeholders identified in Section 2 of this packet. Emphasis is placed on active involvement of all participants so that transition is not seen as the responsibility of only one agency. Issues are raised in a question format to help the user develop an ongoing interagency structure which will be able to respond effectively to the various changes, issues, and problems that will inevitably emerge over time which impact the transition system.

6. Formulating Administrative Policies and Procedures - This section helps the interagency structure established develop administrative policies and procedures for transition. It is critical that the vision established be kept as the driving force throughout this process. Information derived from the Needs Assessment in Section 4 can be particularly useful here. In this section, as in others, emphasis is placed on building on existing structures, policies, and procedures rather than replacing them or establishing a "separate" system for transition. The user is asked to examine and adopt or adapt, for transition purposes, existing policies related to:
   a. Child Find
   b. Eligibility
   c. Referrals
   d. Records Transfer
   e. Evaluations
   f. IFSP/IEP - The Process
   g. IFSP/IEP - The Meeting(s)
   h. Placement
   i. Followup

   This section begins with materials to assist in establishing overall timelines for the process itself. Then each of the 9 topics above is examined. For each topic, considerations are noted and questions are posed to assist in formulation of policies and procedures relevant for the sending and receiving agencies. Following these questions, space is allowed for noting issues that arise during the discussion of these topics which have relevance for the development of strategies for staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation (covered later in this packet).

7. Developing a Program for Staff Involvement - This section helps the interagency structure:
   a. Clarify roles and responsibilities of administrative, direct service, and support staff in sending, receiving, and related agencies.
   b. Determine information and skills needed by staff.
   c. Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate support structures for staff. The user is asked to consider the use of one or more of the following staff development strategies:

1) incorporation of transition issues into standard agency practices such as agency policies and procedures, forms, job descriptions, etc.
2) individual (mentoring, coaching) and group training strategies
3) strategies to help staff become familiar with other agency programs
4) administrative support for transition.

8. Developing a Program for Family Involvement - This section asks the interagency structure to establish a commonly accepted philosophy and principles for family involvement among the participating agencies. It recommends that these be based on a family-centered philosophy. The section also provides materials to help determine strategies for family involvement. The user is asked to consider developing strategies for the use of one or more of the following:
   a. IFSP/IEP Meetings
   b. Individual assistance
   c. Group meetings/trainings
   d. Written materials
   e. Videotapes
   f. Linkage to supplemental services
   g. Cross program visitation
   h. Solicitation and use of family input

9. Developing Strategies to Prepare the Child for the Next Placement and to Prepare the Next Placement to Meet the Needs of the Child - This section provides materials for developing strategies to maximize program coordination and continuity from one program or agency to another. The interagency structure is asked to consider the following:
   a. Characteristics of environment(s) in the receiving agency to determine factors that facilitate placement of the child in the least restrictive setting.
   b. Methods that determine child strengths and needs related to characteristics of next placement in the least restrictive environment.
   c. Developmentally appropriate and functionally relevant strategies that can be used by the sending agency program to assist the child in acquiring skills that will facilitate placement.
   d. In IFSP/IEP transition planning, instructional strategies, and environmental adaptations (as needed) in the next placement that will facilitate placement of the child in the least restrictive environment in the receiving agency.
   e. In IFSP/IEP transition planning, pre-placement activities will help prepare the child, the family, and the next setting for the placement.
   f. Provisions for followup after the child is placed.

SECTION 1

DETERMINING BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

1. What are the characteristics of the children and families and the types of transition that will be the focus(es) of the system? (e.g. transition into infant and toddler services, and/or from these services into preschool, and/or from these services into primary schools; dealing exclusively with agencies that provide services to children with disabilities or a broader range, etc.)

2. What are Federal and State legal requirements that will shape our thinking?

3. What is the status of the existing system that will impact what we do and how we go about it? (These issues include the participating agencies" history with transition, time constraints, personnel issues, interagency issues, types of service delivery mechanisms in sending and receiving programs, compatibility of sending and receiving agency program requirements, level of commitment to transition, etc.)

SECTION 2

DETERMINING PARTICIPANTS IN TRANSITION SYSTEM DESIGN AND OPERATION

Who are the players? Using the worksheet provided, identify agencies with which families are most commonly involved in transition so that a comprehensive and coordinated system can be in place (both early intervention, preschool, and others [e.g. Head Start, Child Care, other public or private child care, or other health or social services]).

Consider how families will be involved in system design and operation. In making these considerations, it may be helpful to further refine these decisions after having reviewed materials found in later parts of this packet related to the Interagency Structure and Family Involvement.

NOTES:

TRANSITION SYSTEM DESIGN PARTICIPANTS

SENDING AGENCIES	WHICH STAFF	ROLE
RECEIVING AGENCIES	**WHICH STAFF**	**ROLE**
FAMILIES	**ROLE**	

NOTES:

SECTION 3

CREATING A SHARED VISION

This section is designed to assist the interagency stakeholder group in establishing a vision shared by the varied participants in the transition system. This includes a process for defining the "big picture" through identification of the characteristics of the transition system that "we" collectively want to establish related to the varied audiences the system will serve (i.e. children, families, direct instructional/intervention staff, and administrative staff/entities)? Once established, this vision should become the cornerstone for decision making across all aspects of transition.

Recommended steps in creating a shared vision include:

1. Use the attached worksheet to answer the following question. What characteristics should the transition system have related to the varied audiences the system will serve (i.e. children, families, direct instructional/intervention staff, and administrative staff/entities)?

2. Incorporating critical elements of these characteristics, draft a vision statement in the space below.

Shared Vision for an Effective Transition System:

NOTES:

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRANSITION SYSTEM

AUDIENCE	DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS
Children	
Families	
Direct Instructional/Intervention Staff	
Administrative Staff/Entities	

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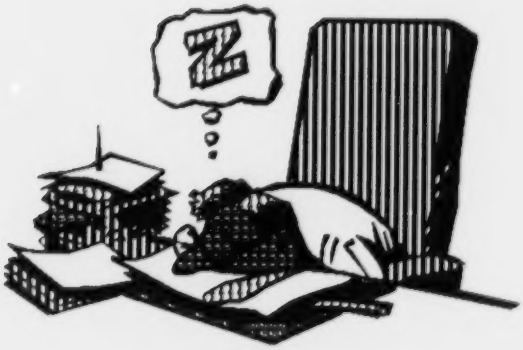

SECTION 4

TRANSITION SYSTEM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section provides a tool for determining the state or local level of readiness for establishing a comprehensive interagency transition system. This is intended to help the user identify and build on existing structures, policies, and procedures rather than replacing them or establishing a "separate" system for transition. This assessment should be completed by the transition team of key stakeholders identified in Section 2 of this packet.

The needs assessment provides the transition team with the following information.

1. The major transition topics are identified on the far left hand side of the needs assessment instrument. These topics include Child Find, Eligibility, Referrals, Records Transfer, Evaluations, IFSP/IEP - The Process, IFSP/IEP - The Meeting, Placement, Followup, Staff Development, Family Involvement, and Child Preparation. These are the topics for which interagency structures, policies, procedures, and program strategies will be developed.

2. For each of these topics, the team is asked to determine:
   a. Is there a system currently in place?

   b. Is it effective?

   c. Is it consistent across agencies?

   d. Does the current system meet federal, state, and, as applicable, local legal requirements for compliance with:
      1) The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B as it applies to children of school age (i.e. requirements that apply for children and youths with disabilities ages 3-21),
      2) The IDEA, Part B, Section 619 provisions, that is, IDEA, Part B requirements that apply uniquely to children with disabilities of preschool age (ages 3-5),
      3) The IDEA, Part H that applies to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, and
      4) Other legal requirements of participating agencies that may impact transition (e.g. requirements of Head Start, child care, etc.)

c. What changes need to be made related to this topic? At this point, issues are being identified which will be resolved using tools provided in sections throughout the remainder of this packet. It is recommended that consideration be given to changes needed:
   1) In one or more of the agencies in order to facilitate a coordinated and consistent interagency structure,
   2) To make possible a system which is consistent with the "shared vision", and
   3) To meet legal requirements.

f. In what priority order will needed changes be addressed? It is assumed that a number of changes may be desired and that it will not be possible to bring all of them about simultaneously for a variety of reasons. Priorities will need to be set. Factors to consider in setting priorities may include:
   1) Those issues on which the team can most easily agree and resolve so that the team can build teamwork and a history of success as a foundation on which to attack more difficult problems;
   2) Those issues that are fundamental from a chronological point of view to establishing the system...that is "first things first", and;
   3) Timelines associated with meeting legal requirements.

Guiding principles in needs assessment and ultimately in system design are:

1. Let the vision drive the system rather than preoccupation with compliance with isolated legal requirements. Compliance is important, but it is only one consideration.

2. Build a transition system that integrates with existing structures and systems within the state or community.

3. Keep it simple. The system should be comprehensive and effective. This does not necessarily mean elaborate. Be reasonable in setting expectations.

4. Understand that resolving "old" needs or problems may create new ones.

TRANSITION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TOPIC	Is there a system currently in place?	Is it effective?	Is it consistent across agencies?	Does the current system meet legal requirements?				What changes need to be made?	Priority
				Part B School Age	Part B Pre-school	Part H	Other (i.e. Head Start)		
Child Find									
Eligibility									
Referrals									
Records Transfer									
Evaluations									
IFSP/IEP - The Process									

Transition System Development Needs Assessment

TOPIC	Is there a system currently in place?	Is it effective?	Is it consistent across agencies?	Does the current system meet legal requirements?				What changes need to be made?	Priority
				Part B School Age	Part B Pre-school	Part H	Other (i.e. Head Start)		
IFSP/IEP - The Meeting									
Placement									
Followup									
Staff Involvement									
Family Involvement									
Child Preparation									

SECTION 5

DEVELOPING AN INTERAGENCY STRUCTURE

1. What type of structure for operation and participation will be used?

   Considerations: Consider transition activities to be addressed and local preferences, resources, and needs, keeping in mind two simple principles: "form follows function", and; stakeholders are created through active participation. For example, it may be appropriate to include key decision makers from involved agencies and family members in transition system design. Once parameters are set, this group can assume an advisory and/or policy approval capacity. Transition committee membership may then be altered to include those agency representatives who have direct day-to-day responsibility for transition operation. An alternate model would be to have a basic committee responsible for the overall transition process with special committees established to develop a specific product or activity (e.g. interagency agreement, staff inservice program, curriculum, etc.) or oversee a particular component (e.g. staff development, family involvement, child preparation).

2. What authority will the committee have to make transition decisions and how will this authority be established?

3. What steps will be taken to determine the extent to which agency representatives authorized to participate in and make decisions affecting their agencies?

4. What type of interagency decision making process will be used? It is crucial that the process be responsive to the decision making process of member agencies' chains of command as well as to interagency needs?

5. What provisions will be made for complaint resolution and problem solving (whether internal, external, or initiated by families, staff, or agencies)?

6. What will be the committee authority and role clarification in relation to interagency funding issues for:

   a. child and family need;
      1) eligibility determination of child and/or family for various funding sources

      2) coordination of funds to facilitate unique interagency placements

   b. transition system administration (e.g. pooling of resources for parent training, staff development, printing forms, etc.)

7. How will the committee address logistics such as a regular meeting date, time, and location?

(It is recommended that the committee rotate location to promote cross program visitation and committee ownership.)

8. How will leadership issues be addressed, in relation to leadership structure (e.g. chair, recorder, etc.), leadership election, rotation schedule, and role clarification?

9. What opportunities will be provided for participants to get to know each other as individuals?

(Building of people-to-people relationships can have a major positive impact on interagency relationships.)

10. What strategies will be developed to address basic standards for effective meetings. These include having clear and purposeful agendas, minutes, and adherence to starting and ending times?

11. What criteria and/or processes will be used for setting priorities to be addressed by the interagency committee.

Considerations include:

a. where there is most agreement so that this interagency success can be the basis for approaching more difficult areas where there may be greater potential for disagreement,

b. where the need is most urgent due to legal, funding, or local considerations,

c. which are most basic to the process and on which other procedures ultimately are based,

d. that require the least expenditure of time and funds to implement,

e. that require the least disruption to current practice and thereby will be more easily accepted and create a greater openness to subsequent changes.

12. What method will be used through which transition policies and procedures will be:

A. <u>Put in writing:</u>

State Requirements

Interagency Agreement

Participating Agencies Policies and Procedures

Staff Job Descriptions

Common Forms

B. Communication to:
Participating Agencies

Staff

Families

C. Implemented (plan and schedule)

D. Monitored and Evaluated

SECTION 6

FORMULATING ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Section Overview:

This section has been designed to assist state agencies and local communities develop transition policies and procedures on the following topics:

1. Child Find
2. Eligibility
3. Referrals
4. Records Transfer
5. Evaluations
6. IFSP/IEP - The Process
7. IFSP/IEP - The Meeting(s)
8. Placement
9. Followup

The section begins with materials to assist in establishing overall timelines for the transition process itself. Then, each of the nine topics above is examined. For each topic, considerations are noted and questions posed to assist in the formulation of policies for sending and receiving agencies. These questions are posed with local implementation in mind. Both the state and the local community will likely identify additional questions. It is recommended that state policies give local agencies maximum flexibility to develop locally responsive policies based on issues addressed in this section.

Following questions for the sending and receiving agencies, space is allowed for making note of issues that arise during the discussion of these topics which have relevance for the development of strategies for staff involvement, family involvement, and child preparation (covered later in this packet).

Timeline Issues:

1. What legal timeline issues currently exist? Can these be changed? If not, they should be incorporated into the overall transition calendar. If they can be changed, consider whether or not changing the timelines would be beneficial given the age of the young children to be served, the interagency nature of services, and the need for time to build supportive relationships with families, etc.

2. What will be the overall transition calendar that will provide the major timelines or timeframes around which administrative policies and procedures for the transition process will be built? It is recommended that the calendar allow as much flexibility as possible to accommodate local circumstances and issues of interagency structures, staff training and involvement, family involvement, and child preparation/service delivery.

Transition Policies and Procedures:

1. **Child Find**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

a. Clarify interrelationship of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transitions under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. What is currently in place?

d. What improvements could be made?

e. Do we use common terms?

f. Other

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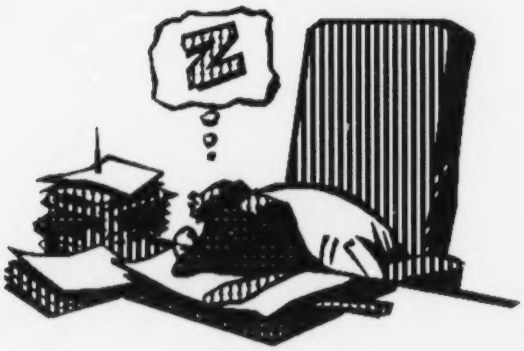

SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who initiates?	Who will get the information?
What information is transmitted?	What will they do with the information?
When is information available and most convenient?	When will it be most helpful to get it (e.g. planning purposes, etc.)?

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
How should the information be transmitted that will best meet needs (what method, form, consent issues, etc.)?		
Needs of Families		
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

2. **Eligibility Determination**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

a. Clarify interrelationships of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transitions under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. Do we use common terms?

d. Do we use common procedures for eligibility determination?

e. What improvements could be made?

f. What will be done for those children who are not eligible for services under IDEA, Part B?

g. What will be done when a child/family needs a service that is not covered under the Part B mandate?

h. Other

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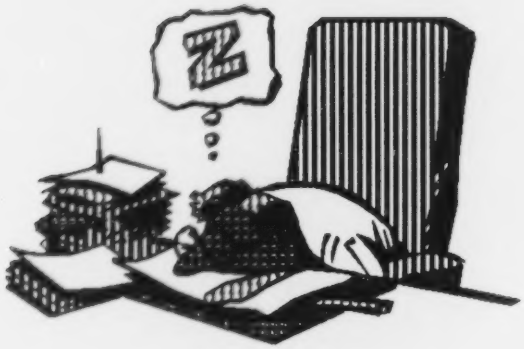

Eligibility Determination

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who coordinates eligibility determination issues?		
What information is available and needed in for eligibility determination?		
When should this information be shared, and when is it needed?		
How should the information be transmitted that will best meet needs (what method, form, consent issues, etc.)?		
Needs of Families		

Eligibility Determination

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

3. **Referral**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

a. Clarify interrelationships of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transitions under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. What is the overall process?

It is recommended that the referral process for transition should start no later than mid-year of the transition year. It should be started at such a time so that the transition process can be concluded by the end of the transition year. Referral activities may include the transmittal of "Child Find" data on an annual basis to the school district and then, in the transition year, starting the process with a prescreening committee composed of a representative(s) from the sending and receiving agencies to determine children who are likely candidates to be eligible for special education and need special education and related services in the next placement. It is recommended that, with parental agreement, any child be referred (1) who is identified through prescreening, (2) on whom agreement cannot be reached through prescreening, or (3) for whom referral is sought at the request of the parent. Following this prescreening, referrals can then be initiated including gathering referral information, completing need forms, transmitting information, etc.

d. What is currently in place?

c. What improvements could be made?

f. Do we use common terms?

g. Other

Referral

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who coordinates/receives the referral process/information?		
What information should be included in the referral, and what will be done with it (e.g. screen, refer to a team, etc.)?		
When should this information be shared and received, and what additional timelines are relevant upon receipt?		
How should the information be transmitted that will best meet needs (what method, form, consent issues, etc.)?		

Referral

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Needs of Families		
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

4. **Records Transfer**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

a. Clarify interrelationship of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transitions under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

Records Transfer

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who initiates records transfer, and who gets them?		
What records are needed and transferred? How is this determination made at the local level (including the role of parental input/consent)? What do they do when they get them (e.g. distribution to other personnel...for what purpose [to verify immunizations, to assist in instructional planning, planning staffing, or bus transportation, etc.])?		
When? What is the sequence of events? At what points throughout the process are records available to be transferred?		

Records Transfer

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
How should the information be transmitted that will best meet needs (what method, form, consent issues, etc.)?		
Needs of Families		
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

5. **Evaluations**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

a. Clarify interrelationship of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transitions under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. What is the evaluation process that is currently in place, including the overall sequence of events? What improvements could be made?

d. Do we use common terms, assessment procedures, etc.? This may take time and successes at working together on an interagency basis to build trust and a common knowledge base between the sending and receiving agency. The ultimate goal should be developing an evaluation process which fully uses available information and which avoids duplication of effort.

e. Agencies should NOT require a certain test (i.e. reject data from another agency), because that is the particular test the agency most commonly uses. Rather, agencies should ensure that the necessary TYPES of evaluation data are collected, recognizing that there may be a variety of instruments that would be acceptable.

f. How and when will information be shared with the parent and who will share this information? The sending agency staff may be excellent resources for sharing this information, because they likely have good rapport with the parent.

g. When and how will evaluation information be shared between sending and receiving agencies? It is suggested that all parties including families have an opportunity to review the information prior to the IEP/IFSP meeting to help them prepare.

h. Other

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who coordinates the evaluation process?		
Who does what evaluations? Evaluation personnel should designated who will be responsible for conducting evaluations on young children and ensure that those personnel have the necessary training and expertise. Evaluation personnel should also be familiar with the evaluation requirements of both agencies.		
What evaluation information will be used? What evaluations are required? It is recommended that this data be used as much as possible. First, it is cost effective to use information already available as long as it is appropriate and current (as opposed to retesting). Second, it is likely that this information comes from staff familiar with the child. Finally, it is of questionable benefit, in most instances, to keep retesting the child on the same or similar instruments...when such data are already available.		

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
When is the most appropriate time to conduct evaluations of referred children due to agency schedules, personnel availability, child/family needs, timeline requirements, etc.?		
Where are evaluations conducted (e.g. in sending agency, in receiving agency, at home, etc)? Where possible, evaluations should take place in settings familiar to the child. Therefore, if needed, arrangements should be made by the sending for receiving agency staff to conduct evaluations in the sending agency center.		
How should the information be transmitted that will best meet needs (what method, form, consent issues, etc.)?		

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
What parental notice and consent issues may apply at this point from an agency perspective and how can these issues be most appropriately addressed?		
Needs of Families		
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

NOTES:

6. **IFSP/IEP Process (Preparation for and Followup to)**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practices, common terminology, etc.)

a. Clarify interrelationship of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transition under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. What are the IFSP/IEP processes currently in place in the sending and receiving agencies? What steps could be taken to use a process which is both family-centered and compatible with the processes used by the respective agencies? Do we use common terms, forms, etc.?

d. How are families involved and at what points?

e. What procedures, materials, and trainings are made available to help the families, sending agency staff, and receiving agency staff prepare for and followup to the meeting?

f. Other

IFSP/IEP Process (Preparation for and Followup to)

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who coordinates the IFSP/IEP process?		
Who in the agency are involved and how?		
What parental notice issues may apply at this point from an agency perspective, and how can these issues be most appropriately addressed?		
How are preparations for meeting logistics handled?		
What forms are applicable to this stage of the process?		

IFSP/IEP Process (Preparation for and Followup to)

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
What time of year is it most convenient for the agency to schedule this process due to legal timelines, staff schedules, availability of current information, etc.?		
Needs of Families		
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

7. **IFSP/IEP Process (The meeting itself)**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

a. Clarify interrelationship of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transition under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. What are the procedures for conducting the IFSP/IEP meetings currently in place in the sending and receiving agencies? What steps could be taken to make meeting procedures compatible with those used by the respective agencies? Do we use common terms, forms, etc.?

d. What is done to help the families and staff from sending and receiving agencies participate effectively in the meeting (e.g. agenda for the meeting, the skills of the meeting chairperson, and other participants) so that the meeting purpose seems clearly to be a family-centered team approach to "planning for a child" rather than "a meeting to help receiving agency staff fill out an IEP form".

e. What strategies are used to help the families prepare and present their perspectives at the meeting? What efforts are made to be sensitive to family preferences for meeting location and schedule?

f. What is the sequence of events (i.e. agenda) at the meeting itself? Is the meeting agenda designed to be sensitive to family and interagency issues and dynamics?

g. Other

IFSP/IEP Process (The meeting itself)

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who in the agency participates and how?		
What forms and legal requirements for the meeting are applicable at this stage?		
What are the best times of the month/week/day for meetings to be responsive to staff schedules?		
Where will meetings be held to be sensitive to agency needs? The family may feel more comfortable meeting in familiar surroundings.		

IFSP/IEP Process (The meeting itself)

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
What forms are applicable to this stage of the process?		
What time of year is it most convenient for the agency to schedule this process due to legal timelines, staff schedules, availability of current information, etc.?		
Needs of Families		
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

8. **Placement**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

Note: In addressing this topic, it may be helpful to review the section on Child Preparation appearing later in this packet.

a. Clarify interrelationship of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transitions under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. How will placement decisions be made including review of placement options that promote the least restrictive environment? What criteria will be used to determine the child's need for a more or less restrictive environment?

d. If the child is determined to be eligible for special education and related services in the public schools, the child is, therefore, eligible...not for a particular program...but for a free appropriate public education in accordance with an IEP which addresses meeting the unique educational needs of the child in the least restrictive environment. The nature, type, frequency, and duration of the service(s) for which the child is eligible is individually decided for each child.

e. What additional (and perhaps non-special education) information does the family or school need (e.g. immunizations, bus schedules, linkages to supplemental services, etc.)?

f. Other

Placement

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who is the resource to the family regarding placement issues? Who coordinates placement issues related to the agency and internal issues (e.g. contact with the program, staffing considerations, transportation, records transfer from central office to the program site, etc.)?		
What assistance is needed, if any, to help the family or the agency in regard to placement issues? What parental notice and consent issues may apply at this point, and how can these issues be most appropriately addressed?		
Needs of Families		

Placement

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

9. **Followup**

CONSIDERATIONS (legal issues, practice, common terminology, etc.)

Note: In addressing this topic, it may be helpful to review the section on Child Preparation appearing later in this packet.

a. Clarify interrelationship of IDEA, Part B, and Part H requirements.

b. Clarify legal requirements of other relevant agencies/programs in the state or local community related to the types of transitions under discussion (e.g. Head Start, Child Care, general education, Chapter 1, etc.).

c. What provision is made in the next placement for the adjustment of the child?

d. What is the sequence of events? (e.g. Is there a formal sequence to followup activities? If so, when and for how long will followup assistance from the sending agency be available.)

Followup

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who will be the contact for followup issues, and when followup is required?		
What is the scope/protocol of followup needs? If the agency is notified of an adjustment problem, if the agency desires followup data, etc.		
How will followup be carried out (what method, form, etc.)?		
Needs of Families		

Followup

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Needs of Staff (Administrative and Instructional)		
Needs of the Child		

SECTION 7

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM FOR STAFF INVOLVEMENT

I. Clarify roles and responsibilities of administrative, direct service, and support staff in sending agency, receiving, and related agencies.

WHO	ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Sending		
Receiving		
Related Agencies		

NOTES:

II. Determine information and skills needed by staff to carry out these roles and responsibilities. This will vary from staff to staff depending on the specific role in the transition process. (The chart below can be used to identify information needs in relation to staff positions.)

INFORMATION & SKILLS	ADMINI-STRATOR	DIRECT SERVICE	SUPPORT STAFF	THERA-PIST	SERVICE COOR.	OTHER
Transition Process						
Working with one's own agency related to the transition process						
Working with another agency's(ies) programs						
Working with families						
Preparing the child for placement in the least restrictive environment						
Interpersonal and group dynamics						
Other (specify)						

NOTES:

III. Develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate support structures for staff to acquire and use information and skills needed to carry out their roles. Agencies should incorporate transition within its structure for staff development, supervision, and evaluation.

When incorporating transition issues into standard agency practices.
Consider the following:

a. Include transition in agency policies and procedures.

b. Incorporate transition activities and procedures in job descriptions.

c. Provide staff supervision and evaluation procedures related to transition.

d. Include "ticklers" or reminders of transition activities on agency calendars.

e. Include transition as a topic on the regular meeting agenda.

f. Provide regular opportunities for staff input to improve transition through meetings, informal conversations, or periodic formal evaluations

g. Other

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who will be responsible for developing transition policies in relation to staff involvement issues?		
Who will be responsible for supervision and evaluation of staff regarding transition procedures?		

Incorporation in Agency Practices

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
What method can be used to ensure that procedures developed are consistent across all agencies?		
What mechanism will be used to ensure staff input into the transition process?		

Individual (mentoring, coaching) and group training strategies should be developed related to transition issues and procedures.

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
What methods will be used to identify staff needs related to the transition process?		
Who will be responsible for setting up training related to transition issues identified? Trainings should be held whenever possible on a joint agency basis.		

Individual (mentoring, coaching) strategies

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Who will be a contact person to ensure that trainings held are announced to all agencies within the community or state?		

Consistent forms and procedures related to transition policies should be developed or adapted and implemented in all agencies.

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
What forms will staff need to complete for transition procedures in relation to evaluation, referral, etc.?		
How will staff be trained to use forms identified as needed to complete the transition process?		

Consistent Forms and Procedures

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
When and who will provide training related to forms for staff?		

IV. Strategies to help staff become familiar with other agency programs should be developed and implemented.

Considerations:

a. Provide opportunities for cross program visitation.

b. Provide videotapes of other agency programs.

c. Provide written materials about other agency programs.

d. Provide formal and informal opportunities for sending and receiving agency staff to get to know each other (joint training, committees, open houses, ect.)

e. Other

Strategies to Familiarize Staff

TOPIC	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
When will cross program visitation take place for staff?		
Who will schedule cross program visitations?		
How will staff be provided access to information about other programs?		
Who is responsible for gathering and disseminating program information related to the agencies?		
What opportunities can be used to allow staff to become familiar with each other?		

NOTES:

V. Administrative support for transition is a critical component of successful transition systems.

Considerations:

a. Model an appropriate attitude and commitment to transition, interagency relations, and family-centered services.

b. Structure staff schedules or provide release time for transition activities.

c. Provide curricula/program leadership.

d. Other

TOPIC **What methods can be used for release time or scheduling changes for staff to participate in transition activities and meetings (e.g. placement meetings)?**	
SENDING AGENCY	**RECEIVING AGENCY**

SECTION 8

DEVELOPING A PROGRAM FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

I. Establish a commonly accepted philosophy and principles for family involvement among the participating agencies. It is recommended that these be based on a family-centered philosophy.

CHARACTERISTICS	PRINCIPLES

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT:

NOTES:

II. Determine strategies for family involvement.

STRATEGIES	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
IFSP/IEP Meetings - What can staff do to help families prepare for IFSP/IEP meetings? What part will staff have in designing the meeting agenda to insure active participation by all, handling logistics of the meeting, and providing written followup to meeting participants?		
Individual Assistance - How will individual transition needs of families be identified and addressed by staff? What methods can be used to link families with other families who have been through the transition process?		

Family Involvement Strategies

STRATEGIES	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Group Meetings/Trainings - Who in the agency will be responsible for developing and announcing family trainings that are, where applicable, interagency in design?		
Written Materials - What written materials need to be developed or accessed in relation to transition process summaries, agency descriptions (regular & special education, other services), parent rights and resource material? (Material may include those developed locally or through public, private, state, or national agencies and organizations). Who will be responsible for developing or accessing these materials?		

STRATEGIES	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Videotapes - How can videotapes be used to assist families in understanding transition issues? Who will be responsible for developing and/or accessing videotapes? What methods will be used for disseminating video to families within the agency?		
Supplemental Services - What methods and materials will be used to help link families to supplemental services within the community or state? What methods will be used to ensure followup once families have been directed to supplemental service agencies?		

STRATEGIES	SENDING AGENCY	RECEIVING AGENCY
Cross Program Visitation - What activities will be provided to families to allow for program visitation prior to placement meetings? These can include individual visitations, group tours, and open houses with receptions at the school by school staff and families. Who will be responsible for scheduling and notifying families of visitations?		
Solicitation and Use of Family Input - What methods will be used to solicit input on child and family issues, relevant issues in planning and evaluating transition procedures and forms, and identification of staff and family training, involvement needs, and strategies?		

SECTION 9

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO PREPARE THE CHILD FOR THE NEXT PLACEMENT AND TO PREPARE THE NEXT PLACEMENT TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD

Develop methods for preparation of the child and the environments in which the child is/will be placed.

STRATEGIES	METHODS	
	INFANT/TODDLER TO PRESCHOOL	PRESCHOOL TO PRIMARY
How will there be an assessment of characteristics of environment(s) to determine factors that facilitate placement of the child in the least restrictive setting? Options include: surveys, interviews, observations, locally generated assessment tools or adaptations of tools developed through other researchers, use of a generic characteristic listing which can be adapted to idiosyncratic characteristics of individual settings given variance in facilities, personnel, class membership characteristics, etc.		
What methods will be used to determine child strengths and needs related to characteristics of next placement in the least restrictive environment? Options include use of locally generated checklists or procedures developed through other researchers and input from multiple sources including family priorities.		

Methods for Preparation

STRATEGIES	METHODS	
What developmentally appropriate and functionally relevant strategies will be used to assist the child in acquiring skills that will facilitate placement? Options include the use of locally developed curricula or strategies developed through other researchers. Focus instruction not only on what the child learns but also how the child learns; not only on what is taught but also on how it is taught. Develop strategies within the interagency transition committee to foster curricula continuity between agencies.		
What will be considerations in transition planning for instructional strategies and curricula and environmental adaptations (as needed) in the next placement that will facilitate placement of the child in the least restrictive environment? Recognize that any listing or checklist of characteristics of the least restrictive environment is intended to help the user identify what needs to be done to facilitate placement of the child in that setting as a tool for program planning. The listing is **not** criteria for placement in a less restrictive setting and should **never** be used as a tool to exclude a child from a less restrictive placement. Make recommendations as part of IFSP/IEP development through a team approach.		

Methods for Preparation

STRATEGIES	METHODS	
What pre-placement activities will help prepare the child and the next setting for the placement? Options include pre-placement visit(s) of the child to the next placement, advising staff and families on strategies to help support the child through this change, and adjustment problems that may be more indicative of the change itself than particular child need (although this issue too should be addressed, if relevant), depending on the time of year of the placement and other unique factors, prepare the class to receive a new classmate, and provide assistance to staff (as needed) in preparing to implement IFSP/IEP recommendations, particularly any adaptations that may need to be provided to facilitate placement in the least restrictive environment.		
What provisions will be made for followup after the child is placed? Options include establishing linkages between staff which will support the child's adjustment in the new placement (e.g. opening communication channels, sharing of written materials), providing support to staff (as needed) in implementing IFSP/IEP recommendations, particularly any adaptations that may need to be provided to facilitate placement in the least restrictive environment, and designing and implementing an efficient structure to evaluate effectiveness of transition process in preparing child for next placement in the least restrictive environment.		

NOTES: